(b) if so, the number of serials telecast on it;

(c) whether this programme has been discontinued;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the time by which it is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (e). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Performance of Steel Authority of India Limited

2957. DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) the Financial performance of the Steel Authority of India Ltd. during the first six months, Plant-wise;

(b) whether the profitability of the SAIL has declined during the current year as compared to the last year;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to improve the performance of the SAIL?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) During the first six months of the current year; i.e. April to September, 1996, SAIL has made a pre-tax profit (unaudited) of Rs. 414.98 crores and after providing Rs. 53.53 crores towards Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) the profit is Rs. 361.45 crores. The plant-wise net profit/ loss is as under :

	Rs./Crores
- Bhilai Steel Plant	388
- Durgapur Steel Plant	(-) 96
- Rourkela Steel Plant	(-) 127
- Bokaro Steel Plant	237
- Alloy Steels Plant	(-) 19
- Salem Steel Plant	(-) 25
- Raw Materials Division; Other Central Units etc.	57
Net Profit before tax	415
Provision for Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT)	54
Net Profit after tax	361

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The decline in profits is mainly attributable to abnormal escalation in input prices viz. coal, petroleum products, power, transportation and higher interest and depreciation costs.

(d) SAIL is taking steps on a continuous basis to improve the performance, which include increasing capacity utilisation, improving productivity, introducing energy conservation measures, improving availability of equipment through effective maintenance, improving product-mix,. making value added items and meeting customer's requirements, and reduction in consumption viz. coke, energy, stores & spares, etc.

Air Freight Carriers Operation

2958. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) the foreign and Indian air freight carriers operating to and from India;

(b) the airports where these aircraft land and take off;

(c) the rates for various categories of cargo from India to Europe;

(d) whether the freight rates to African countries from India are four to five times more than the freight rates to European countries;

(e) whether the high rate of freight charges to African countries is designed to make Indian goods non-competitive in African countries;

(f) if so, whether the Governement have taken up this matter with any international agency for arbitration and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (e). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

Regional Centres of Films Division

2959. SHRI RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV :
SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR :
SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BRADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) the number of regional centres of Films Division in the country;

(b) whether all the facilities have been made available in these centres;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government propose to encourage the artists and the telecast of regional serials; and

(e) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) There are two regional production centres of the Films Division, namely, Southern Regional